

InsightShare PHOTOSTORY Project: 'Voice of the Batwa'

PARTICIPATORY VIDEO HELPS THE BATWA INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF UGANDA ADVOCATE FOR THEIR RIGHTS! HOW DOES IT WORK?

THE PROCESS BEGINS WITH THREE DAYS OF TRAINING IN A WORKSHOP



THE TRAINEES ARE A MIXTURE OF LOCAL BATWA COMMUNITY MEMBERS AS WELL AS OUTSIDE EXTENSION WORKERS



AFTER LEARNING HOW TO USE THE CAMERA AND PLAN VIDEO MESSAGES, THE TRAINEES PASS ON THEIR LEARNING IN THREE BATWA COMMUNITIES...



...WHILE OTHERS ARE SETTLED ON DONATED BUT INFERTILE LAND...

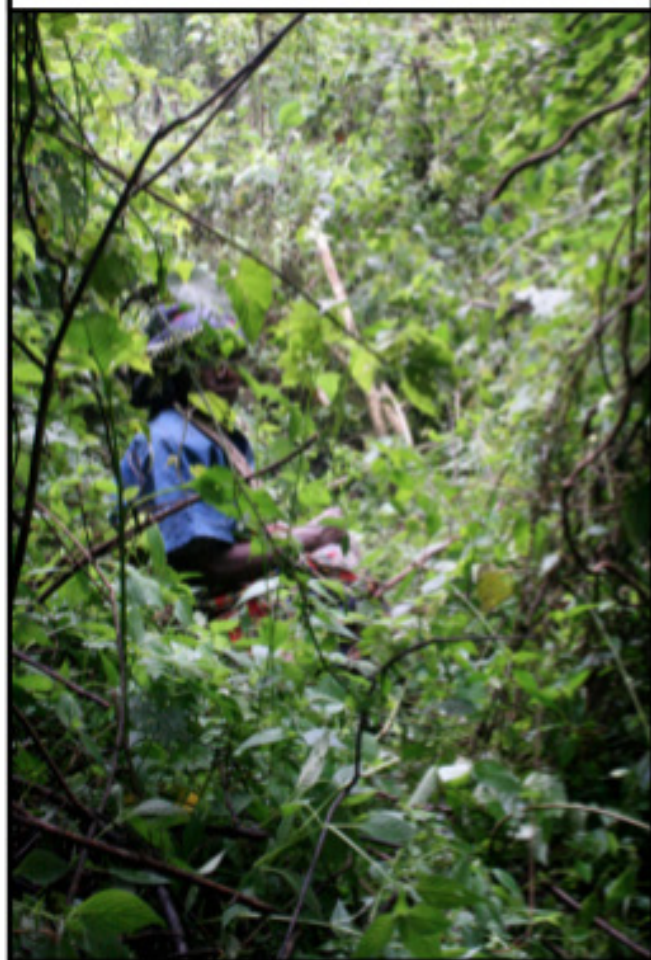


ONE GROUP LIVE IN KISORO TOWN, WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN FORCED TO BECOME SQUATTERS SINCE THEY WERE EXPELLED FROM THEIR ANCESTRAL FORESTS TO MAKE WAY FOR CONSERVATION AND TOURISM...

...WHILE MOST LIVE AS BONDED
LABOURERS, SQUATTING ON THE
AGRICULTURAL LAND OF THEIR
NEIGHBOURS.



THE BATWA STILL PRACTICE THEIR
TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND DECIDED TO
FILM THEMSELVES VISITING ONE OF
THEIR SACRED SITES...



...WHERE THEY
SACRIFICED A SHEEP



WE OFFER THIS TO
OUR ANCESTORS!



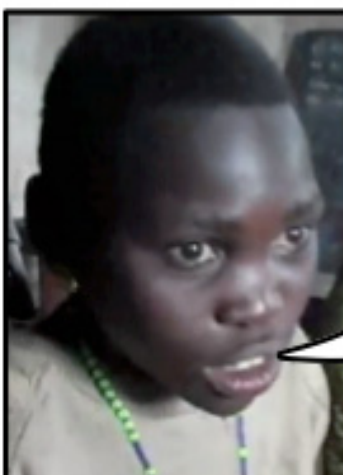


IF WE HAD LAND, WE COULD GROW CROPS, FEED OUR FAMILIES, AND SELL IN THE MARKET. EVEN WITH TALENT, POVERTY STOPS YOU MAKING THINGS HAPPEN!

...AND THE POVERTY OF THE LANDLESS...



MEANWHILE, IN THE TOWN, THE LOCAL BATWA TALK OF POOR ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND HEALTHCARE....



...AND DISCRIMINATION AT SCHOOL...

AT SCHOOL THEY DON'T EVEN WANT TO GIVE US UNIFORMS, ITS A LONG WALK AND THEY BEAT US OR EXCLUDE US IF WE ARE LATE

..AND THEY WORRY ABOUT DISEASE SPREADING FROM FILTHY LATRINES...



WE ARE SUFFERING BECAUSE OUR HOMES ARE BUILT OF SUCH POOR MATERIALS



..AND APPALLING HOUSING CONDITIONS...



IN THE HEALTH CLINIC, THEY TREAT YOU DIFFERENTLY. EVEN IF THEY GIVE YOU MEDICINE, THERE IS SOMETHING IN THEIR ATTITUDE BECAUSE YOU ARE A MUTWA

...AND THE RACISM THEY EXPERIENCE FROM THEIR NON-BATWA NEIGHBOURS, WHO SOMETIMES VIEW THEM AS LITTLE MORE THAN ANIMALS.

THOSE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE DESCRIBE THE INDIGNITY OF HAVING TO BEG OR DO CASUAL WORK FOR THEIR LANDED NEIGHBOURS...



YOU FINISH AT 7PM AND THEY ONLY GIVE YOU A TINY AMOUNT OF FOOD



ALL THESE SHEEP ARE MY LANDLORD'S. HE ONLY PAYS ME ONE SHEEP A YEAR FOR HERDING THEM



WHEN THEY GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO DRINK, THEY DON'T EVEN GIVE YOU A CUP, BUT PUT IT STRAIGHT INTO YOUR HANDS!



...AND THE RACIST INSULTS THAT THEY EXPERIENCE FROM OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE AREA

BUT THE BATWA ARE FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS



THE GOVERNMENT BROUGHT US FROM THE FOREST THINKING WE'D DEVELOP LIKE OTHERS, BUT LIFE IS WORSE FOR US AND WE WANT TO DEMAND LEGAL ACCESS TO THE FOREST

AND THEY ARE LEARNING TO MAKE A FILM TO HELP THEM



SCREENING IT TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY GETS MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED



I'M PLEASED TO SAY THAT WE BATWA MADE THIS FILM, NOBODY ELSE. I THINK THAT WE CAN LEARN TO USE VIDEO VERY WELL IN THE FUTURE. WHEN ITS SHOWN IN KAMPALA, PEOPLE WILL UNDERSTAND OUR SITUATION

AND THEY UNDERSTAND THE POTENTIAL OF HOW THEIR FILM COULD HELP THEM





I DIDN'T THINK THEY'D LET ME TOUCH A CAMERA, BUT NOW I'M VERY HAPPY TO SAY THAT I'VE LEARNT HOW TO MAKE A FILM



AND THE FILM IS ALREADY MAKING WAVES...



THE DISTRICT REGIONAL COMMISSIONER MAKES A STATEMENT

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE THE RESETTLEMENT OF THE BATWA SERIOUSLY, IT SHOULD NOT BE LEFT TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS ALONE. THE FEW BATWA IN POSSESSION OF LAND SHOULD BE ASSISTED TO RETAIN IT BY ACQUIRING TITLES



...AND SCREENINGS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT GENERATE PLEDGES OF SUPPORT

THERE IS NO WAY SOMEONE CAN BEAT ABOUT THE BUSH, PEOPLE CAN READ THE REPORT AND WATCH THE VIDEO - ITS THE BEST MESSAGE SO FAR, I'VE EVER SEEN

YOU CAN SEE THAT WHAT IS BASICALLY NEEDED IS LAND, THEY ARE CRYING FOR LAND

I THINK THAT THIS METHODOLOGY GOES A LONG WAY TO SHOW US THAT WHATEVER SUPPORT YOU HAVE TO GIVE THE COMMUNITY, THE COMMUNITY MUST BE THE FOCUS!

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ALSO PLEDGED TO TAKE SOME IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ADDRESS THE APPALLING SEWAGE PROBLEMS FACED BY THOSE BATWA LIVING IN THE TOWN.

LATER, THE FILM WAS ALSO SCREENED TO A NATIONAL AUDIENCE OF NGOS AND GOVERNMENT IN KAMPALA, INCLUDING TO THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, AND GAVE RISE TO MUCH IMPORTANT DEBATE

THE FILM HAS ALSO BEEN SHOWN AT THE UN HEADQUARTERS, THE WORLD BANK, THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION AND AT THE WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS IN BARCELONA IN 2008. BATWA REPRESENTATIVES HAVE BEEN PRESENT AT ALL THESE SCREENINGS AND WERE ABLE TO ADVOCATE DIRECTLY ON BEHALF OF THEIR COMMUNITIES. THE FILM HAS ALSO HELPED RAISE FUNDING SUPPORT FROM UNDP SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM.